



Journal of Eastern African Studies

ISSN: 1753-1055 (Print) 1753-1063 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjea20>

Humanitarian urbanism in a post-conflict aid town: aid agencies and urbanization in Gulu, Northern Uganda

Karen Büscher, Sophie Komujuni & Ivan Ashaba

To cite this article: Karen Büscher, Sophie Komujuni & Ivan Ashaba (2018) Humanitarian urbanism in a post-conflict aid town: aid agencies and urbanization in Gulu, Northern Uganda, Journal of Eastern African Studies, 12:2, 348-366, DOI: [10.1080/17531055.2018.1456034](https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2018.1456034)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2018.1456034>



Published online: 29 Mar 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 69



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Humanitarian urbanism in a post-conflict aid town: aid agencies and urbanization in Gulu, Northern Uganda

Karen Büscher^a, Sophie Komujuni^a and Ivan Ashaba^b

^aDepartment of Conflict & Development Studies, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium; ^bInstitute of Development Policy, Antwerp University, Antwerp, Belgium

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the urban outcomes of protracted humanitarian intervention in Gulu town, Northern Uganda. Using the concept of humanitarian urbanism, we demonstrate how intensive external donor-aid has shaped urbanization in the capital of Northern Uganda. The starting point for our analysis is the recent process of withdrawal of humanitarian NGOs and the shifts from humanitarian to development interventions. This shift was characterized by a special focus on urban development, coordinated by the Ugandan state while largely donor supported. We argue that this shift, instead of introducing an urban involvement of aid agencies in Gulu town, actually reveals a protracted continuum of aid agencies' interventions in Gulu's urbanity. The current withdrawal of humanitarian organizations in fact makes the long-term effects of these interventions especially visible. As such, it offers an interesting starting point to investigate processes of humanitarian urbanism and its profound impacts on the urban material, socio-economic and political landscapes. This paper demonstrates how aid agencies, since the armed conflict in Northern Uganda, have been key actors in shaping different dimensions of urban governance. Three case-studies are presented, which variously focus upon the urban educational sector, Gulu's physical urban planning, and Gulu's cultural institution. They reveal how today's reconfigurations of the urban aid-landscape have redrawn the complex relations between urban inhabitants, aid agencies, and the Ugandan state.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 August 2016
Accepted 5 February 2018

KEYWORDS

Humanitarianism; Gulu;
Uganda; urbanization; aid
town; donor-withdrawal

When my contract was ended I was not really surprised, as so many NGOs have been scaling down lately or have left Gulu. I was not surprised, this happens when the war is over; the war has been over for so long now, those agencies become disinterested (...). I have been jobless for a while, you know we are many who come from NGOs wondering around for contracts, it's not easy. We suffer! (...) I am happy to have found a new contract, we work on sustainable livelihood transformation, the future is now development, sustainable development, so hopefully donors will stay with us this time.¹

This woman is one amongst many young people who have a long career trajectory of 'NGO work' in Gulu town, the so-called 'aid capital' of Northern Uganda. With a university degree in project management and a CV showing a long list of international trainings,

she has worked for five different NGOs (four international and one national) over the past nine years. In 2015, the local NGO for which she was working closed its doors, after one year of revising and downscaling its activities, when one of the main international donors had seized, and a second main donor had strongly reduced their support. She explains how this did not come to her as a surprise. Northern Uganda, after the peace talks in 2006 when the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel movement left Uganda, is internationally recognized as a post-conflict region, 'peaceful' now since ten years. Although several authors have pointed at the strong precarities that remain in Northern Uganda's post-conflict society,² at least on paper, part of the humanitarian incentives attracting hundreds of international aid organizations to Northern Uganda have largely disappeared. Only very sporadically does an LRA combatant still return from 'the bush' to Gulu: the internally displaced people (IDP) settlements have been closed; child soldiers have grown up.

Accordingly, NGOs and their local partners gradually shifted their focus from immediate humanitarian needs towards post-conflict reconstruction activities, investing in domains of for example psycho-social support, education or transitional justice. From 2006 onwards, this post-conflict environment still provided a context in which very large numbers of urban-based international aid organizations and their local NGO partners were active in Northern Uganda. This context remained fairly stable, until 2013–14, when several of these organizations left Northern Uganda; many of them to focus on the 'new' humanitarian emergency resulting from the South Sudanese civil war that started at the end of 2013.

The transition of foreign aid from humanitarian assistance to reconstruction and later development was partly politically steered by the Ugandan government, in an attempt to regain control over the region. In a recent study, Sande Lie has argued that Museveni tried to reframe the situation in Northern Uganda as a phase of 'recovery' instead of 'crisis' in order to reorient donor support into government-led reconstruction programmes.³ Gradually, NGOs adapted to this transition by reorienting their own activities towards reconstruction and development, or aligned with the Governments Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP) programmes.⁴ Corruption scandals within the PRDP programme in 2012 however led to the departure of a number of donors.⁵ Other dynamics further influenced the significant fall in the number of aid organizations, especially from 2013–14 onwards, such as the global financial crisis as well as the shrinking international legitimacy of president Museveni.

In 2010, NGO Forum-Gulu (a platform uniting all local and international NGOs in Gulu) counted 120 members, at the time of fieldwork in 2016, that number had gone down to 60, of which only about 40–45 were still active and operational.⁶ Examples of NGOs that had been very active in Gulu and now closed their doors in Gulu are: War Child, American Refugee Committee, Invisible Children, and Medcins Sans Frontières (MSF). Many international agencies that are still present in Gulu have drastically scaled down in their activities, and local NGOs increasingly fail to attract donor funding. One concrete example is USAID, whose budgets cuts led to the closing down of NGOs programmes like Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods (NUDIEL); Northern Uganda Malaria, AIDS and Tuberculosis Programme (NUMAT) and Northern Uganda – Health integration to Enhance Services (NU-HITES).

For some people, as for example NGO-employees like the women quoted above, these developments could to a certain extent be 'expected' in the sense that humanitarian

agencies follow humanitarian crises, and their actions are ‘temporary’ in nature. For others, however, the departure of NGOs came sudden, as will be illustrated later on in this paper. The presence of aid agencies had been so protracted, to a point that it had become part of Gulu’s day-to-day urbanism and an integral part of its local economy, the physical urban landscape, its civil society and its urban governance structures. As a result of a long history of proliferation of aid agencies in a context of general state absence, Gulu’s urban service delivery became heavily dependent on external actors.

In fact, Gulu town only started to ‘urbanize’ and to develop into a city during the LRA conflict and post-war humanitarian interventions (Branch, 2013; Nibbe). It became an example of what is referred to as an ‘NGO town’ or an ‘aid town’, and humanitarianism has been a central feature of Gulu’s urbanization. This article demonstrates that given this strong intertwinement of Gulu’s urbanization with protracted humanitarianism, the effects of this changing donor landscape and NGO pull-out are multiple and profound.

The withdrawal of humanitarian agencies from Gulu went together with the introduction of an urban agenda for sustainable development in Northern Uganda. Headed by the World Bank, a large-scale infrastructural urbanization project was launched in Gulu. This project was framed as a shift from humanitarian to development intervention, and offered a medium for a ‘new’ kind of engagements of aid agencies with the urban space. Yet, what this paper will demonstrate is that this shift actually reveals a protracted continuum of aid agencies’ interventions in Gulu’s urbanity. Without the explicit ‘urban agenda’ as it is introduced in Gulu today, aid agencies have profoundly given shape to Gulu’s urbanization process.

By taking a closer look at different levels and aspects of urban governance, we will show that the current withdrawal of humanitarian organizations in fact makes the long-term effects of these interventions extra visible.

To analyse these urban interventions, we use the concept of ‘humanitarian urbanism’, which refers to ‘the production of urban space through protracted humanitarian action’.⁷ The current withdrawal of humanitarian agencies offers an interesting moment and starting point to investigate the diverse effects of humanitarian urbanism on Gulu’s urban material, socio-economic and political urban landscape. For this investigation, we will zoom in on three domains of urbanism: urban service delivery, urban planning and urban institutions. These three domains represent crucial arenas of urban governance and are generally perceived as being key challenges in urban development in Africa.⁸

By analysing how Gulu’s currently shifting aid landscapes have impacted these three domains, the authors demonstrate how humanitarian urbanism is at work as a dynamic social, spatial and political process. Further, we argue that today’s reconfigurations of the urban aid-landscape have redrawn the complex relations between urban inhabitants, aid agencies and the Ugandan state, without changing the internal logics of humanitarian urbanism.

Our analysis enables a better understanding of the transformation of urban spaces in chronic situations of conflict, humanitarian crisis and post-conflict reconstruction. This study links up to broader theory on humanitarian urbanism, humanitarian geographies and adds an urban angle to the debates on ‘aidlands’ or the spatial landscapes of aid. In a first part of this paper, this concept of humanitarian urbanism will be presented in further detail, as well as the notion of the ‘urban aidland’ to situate our case within in

the relevant academic debates. The analysis then focuses on three cases: the educational sector, Gulu's physical urban planning and Gulu's cultural institution. They present original entry-points to study the ways in which humanitarian urbanism is at stake in explicit and implicit, visible and more invisible ways. They offer a rich insight in different manifestations of humanitarian urbanism and its current reconfigurations. As they also form key domains of urban development agenda's that aim at sustainable urbanization, this paper concludes by arguing that a recognition of humanitarian urbanism as a process shaping the relationships between urban inhabitants, the Ugandan state and external donors should be part of an 'urban turn' in development-interventions in Northern Uganda.

This paper is based on original data gathered by the three authors through ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the author in Gulu town between 2013 and 2017. Interviews have been conducted with a variety of urban actors such as – amongst others – local and international NGO officials, local government representatives at the district-, municipal- and division level, urban planners, engineers, students, school directors, teachers, local and international researchers, entrepreneurs, members of women's groups, 'fixers' and religious as well as customary leaders. Insights from the data collection have been complemented by insights from secondary literature (media reports, donor- and government documentation) and earlier academic studies on the history and more recent trajectories of Gulu town. Our study is especially inspired by and to some extent further builds on the work of Adam Branch and Ayesha Nibbe on the local, urban impact of international humanitarian, development and peace-building interventions in Northern Uganda.

Humanitarian urbanism and the urban aidland: a conceptual introduction

Using a particular urban lens to study the spatial implications of protracted international aid-interventions is indebted to the insights emerging from the spatial turn in social studies investigating humanitarian-, development- and peace-building action.⁹

Several scholars, mostly anthropologists, have documented how 'spaces of aid' shape and are being shaped by humanitarianism. The concept of '*aidland*', introduced by Apthorpe in 2005¹⁰ has made its own way through development anthropology, used to describe the world of humanitarian and development workers as a 'bubble', with its own rituals, symbolism, norms and languages.¹¹ It has been critically scrutinized by others arguing that the concept diverts attention to the political and material effects of development intervention.¹² In her book '*spaces of aid*',¹³ Lisa Smirl uses a more material approach to the concept of '*aidland*', focusing on the material cultures and physical environment of the landscapes of aid. Additional research has particularly focused on the architectural consequences of humanitarian action referred to as the spatial 'forms of aid'.¹⁴

An urban focus in this literature is often restricted to the use of urban case-studies, as urban centres often happen to be the logistical centres of humanitarian and peace-building economies. Studies explicitly focusing on the process of urbanization and the production of urban space through humanitarian and peace-building interventions are scarce.¹⁵ It is only recently that 'the urban' is being recognized as a critical arena for humanitarian-, development- and peace-building engagements.¹⁶ A first dynamics behind this

recognition is the strong focus on urban security and urban counter-insurgency in the post- 9/11 approach on the security-development nexus.¹⁷ A second dynamics is the 'urban turn' in development aid, whereby cities in the Global South are increasingly presented as crucial centres of transformation.¹⁸ Since the start of the new millennium, fast urban growth in Africa and the social, economic and environmental challenges it generates has urged policy makers and development actors to more explicitly engage with the urban.¹⁹ The specific urban 'agenda' within the Sustainable Development Goals is an illustration of this urban turn and has been translated in the new 'urban agenda' of UNHABITAT.²⁰ In Uganda, the World Bank is implementing an ambitious programme on urban development, as we will further explain later. Yet, even today, remarkably much more attention is being devoted to the humanitarian-, development-, or security impacts of urbanization, rather than to the urban impacts of humanitarian- peace building- or development interventions.²¹

There is no particular academic strand of literature that takes 'aid towns' as their analytical unit. With 'aid towns', we refer to urban centres that become concentrations of international humanitarian- and development NGOs and transform into the physical cores of 'humanitarian space'. Examples of such aid towns are to be found in contexts of both war and disaster in the global south, see for example Kaboul (Afghanistan), Juba (South Sudan), Banda Ajeh (Indonesia), or Goma (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Gulu is another clear example of an aid town, and like Büscher and Vlassenroot have argued for the case of Goma, its urban development has in itself partly been an outcome of the protracted presence and interventions of international aid agencies.²²

To understand the complex interaction between aid agencies and the city and its processes of urbanization, the notion of 'humanitarian urbanism' provides some useful insights. After being introduced by Marianne Potvin, not many researchers have engaged with the concept. Yet, it convincingly theorizes the intersection of humanitarian actions and urbanization processes, studying how humanitarian presence and action significantly shapes and reshapes urbanity. It offers an analytical lens to explore 'a novel urban condition that results from the expansion of the spatial, chronological and ideological scopes of humanitarian interventions'.²³ Under this 'novel urban condition', Potvin goes beyond a narrow focus on material spatiality, investigating also social, economic, and political urban processes that emerge from humanitarian action. This approach offers analytical possibilities to investigate the agency of humanitarian actors in Gulu in different dimensions of the urban space.

Characteristic of humanitarian urbanism is the crucial agency of humanitarian actors, who in a context of a weak or absent state position themselves as key agents in providing urban jobs, offering urban public services, in shaping civil society, urban planning and urban governance in general. Potvin argues that humanitarian urbanism evolves as a process of intensifying urban agency, from humanitarian actors intervening in the city to humanitarian actors increasingly governing the city.²⁴

Gulu's urban trajectory has strongly been influenced by this process, its history of humanitarian urbanism goes back to the second half of the 1990's when a first wave of humanitarian agencies poured into the region, on the demand of the Ugandan Government to assist in the IDP camps.²⁵ Several scholars have studied the spatial, socio-economic and psychological consequences of the dynamics of protracted forced 'encampment' during the war in Northern Uganda.²⁶ While much of Gulu's urban

evolution of the past ten to fifteen years has been shaped dramatically by its function as an IDP camp during the violent conflict, its urbanization process needs to be understood beyond the forced encampment history of the conflict in Northern Uganda. As such, it is equally important to understand humanitarian spatial agency beyond the humanitarian emergency-phase, embodied by spaces of protection such as refugee- and IDP camps. Where these camps represent an explicit form of humanitarian place-making, other, more implicit forms of spatial modes of intervention can be observed in post-conflict external interventions of development and peace-building.²⁷

As has been argued elsewhere, the proliferation of aid-agencies in aid towns has to some extent instigated a transfer of power and legitimacy from the state to the advantage of international actors.²⁸ Their emerging position in urban governance was among other things due to the heavy dependency of Gulu's public service delivery on international aid.²⁹ Literature on post-conflict service delivery has demonstrated how this strongly influences the public authority and legitimacy of state institutions and the relationship between donors, states and civilians.³⁰ 'Replacing' state institutions in providing water, health infrastructure, education, protection, justice, conflict mediation etc., has inevitably produced and reproduced these external actors' urban public authority. This public authority and external agencies' position in urban governance has been pointed out by Potvin as a key aspect of humanitarian urbanism.³¹ However, the relationship between humanitarian agencies and the Ugandan state is far more complex than a situation of humanitarian actors replacing the state in its core functions. The work of Adam Branch has for example revealed how humanitarian agencies have played a hugely important political role in reinforcing the Museveni regime in its violent strategies of dominance and control in the North.³² From our analysis it also becomes clear how humanitarian urbanism is a dynamics process that influences the complex relationships between urban inhabitants, donors and the Ugandan state. Current dynamics of reconfigurations of the urban aid landscape form an excellent angle to study this.

Gulu town offers several interesting perspectives to study humanitarian urbanism. For this paper, we choose to focus on the educational sector, urban planning and the customary institution, but we could as well have focused on urban security governance, on the local economy of humanitarian brokers, or on the urban leisure industry. We have chosen three urban domains that represent crucial domains of urban governance, in which the current changes of Gulu's aid landscape have had very different impacts.

Urban service delivery: education for 'vulnerable children'

From the start of the development of the humanitarian 'industry' in Gulu, children and youth have been central to the dominant humanitarian narrative and actions. The massive forced recruitment of children by the LRA put young people in an extra precarious situation. In Gulu town, the phenomenon of so-called 'night commuters' whereby children from surrounding villages would commute to town at night to find refuge, magnified the precarity of these children. During the war, several aid organizations specifically targeted these children. Other organizations specifically supported the reception, counselling and reintegration of ex-child-soldiers. According to the head of NGO forum in Gulu, in 2008–2009 more than half of the aid organizations present in Gulu specifically targeted 'vulnerable children' (also including orphans, HIV positive children, disabled children and

children in extreme poverty) in their programmes. He referred to vulnerable children as 'one of these highly fundable categories' for donors.³³ NGOs such as War Child, ChildAid, Invisible Children, ChildrenUp, Save the Children, and Watoto Church explicitly framed their actions within the discourse of vulnerable children. Aiding those children took the form of 'hardware' (build infrastructures such as classrooms, dormitories, reception centres, orphanages, training centres) and 'software' (providing trainings, psycho-social support, study-grants).³⁴ The sector 'par excellence' through which this aid became most visible was the educational sector.

Where humanitarian organizations during the war provided aid in make-shift schools, after the war they invested in the rehabilitation of the existing school-infrastructure. The bad condition of the educational sector was as much a result of decades of neglect and lack of investment from the Ugandan government as it was a result of the war.³⁵ Where education is often perceived as a primary public service and one of the core social functions of the state, in Gulu international aid agencies for over more than ten years became the main providers of public service delivery. One informant working at Acholi Educational Initiative told us:

At one moment, it was like the government let them take over completely. They (NGOs) could more or less decide where and how they would construct school infrastructure (...) Nowadays government is more strict and NGOs adhere to the government development plan. But they (the government) built on the work of NGOs. You stroll around in Gulu town, the most beautiful dorms and classrooms are built with donor money.³⁶

One NGO-employee and father of two confirmed this appreciation of NGO school infrastructure:

You ask around in town, the best schools today are still the ones being sponsored by NGOs. The infrastructure is better, they have good books, better material and teachers are more motivated.³⁷

This was being echoed by a number of other informants. The initial focus of 'vulnerable children' resulted, somewhat contradictory, to NGO school programmes becoming one of the most 'high standard' in town. The SOS Children's Nursery School is one example, referred to as and presenting itself as 'one of the most modern and high standard schools in Gulu according to international standards'.³⁸ According to some informants, donor's interest in children and education and the proliferation of NGOs in Gulu town led to the expansion of urban private schools and daycare services.³⁹ Although this is certainly also linked to other dynamics such as the emergence of a so-called 'middle-class', we observe similar dynamics in other NGO towns like Goma, Eastern Congo, where a process of 'NGO-ization of the educational sector' went hand in hand with its privatization.⁴⁰ Similar cases further also confirm how fragmented and fluctuated aid support inevitably resulted in a fragmented educational landscape. According to Potvin, this fragmentation is a central characteristic of humanitarian urbanism.⁴¹

One of the NGOs which has considerably invested in school infrastructure in Gulu town is *Invisible Children*, which started to work in Gulu from 2005 onwards. Apart from refurbishing existing structures affected by the war, they also built school libraries and large dormitories. Yet their main support in terms of education was granting scholarships (providing for school fees, transport fees, uniforms and school materials) for

different kinds of 'vulnerable children' such as orphans and ex-child soldiers. Between 2005 and 2015, they had granted over 5000 of these scholarships in Northern Uganda.⁴² In 2015, Invisible Children closed its doors after their head office in the US announced the end of its programmes due to lack of funding.⁴³ At that same time, a number of other important agencies supporting education in Gulu had scaled down or phased out, like for example Windle Trust, ChildrenUp and Save the Children.

This withdrawal was impacting the educational sector in several ways. Especially secondary schools, such as for example Sr. Samuel Bakers School saw the number of sponsored children decreasing from 320 in 2008 to 34 in 2015.⁴⁴ A number of students of Sir Samuel Baker school and St. Joseph's College explained how their sponsoring had been ended and how they had not been informed well in advance and thus were not prepared. One student explained how he had tried to contact the organization which for some time already did not have an operational office in Gulu anymore.⁴⁵ At the time of research he had quit school for one semester. A large group of these sponsored children come from poor families outside Gulu, and prove to have difficulties finding alternative resources to provide a follow up after the end of their scholarship.⁴⁶ In 2014, a group of parents went to the Local Councilor on the district level (LCV) to ask for help after Invisible Children had ended the scholarships for their children. The LCV on his turn went lobbying with other NGOs to provide some support.⁴⁷ According to the schoolteachers as well as the representative of NGO forum, there has been a correlation between the donor withdrawal and school drop out in several schools in Gulu.⁴⁸ Beyond the individual students, the dropout further impacted the schools in general as they saw their incomes declining, leading to significant cuts in the supplements on teachers salaries (as was the case in St. Josephs College). Some of the teachers there left after these budget cuts to try and find a position in private schools in Gulu, one of them moved to Kampala.⁴⁹

A final consequence, stressed by several informants, was that schools that before had been heavily donor sponsored now have seen their student population changing, with only those urban based children remaining whose parents are able to pay full school fees. Although the Ugandan government is providing a fee of 141000 Ugandan shilling (38 US \$) per student,⁵⁰ the average yearly fees are much higher (St. Josephs fee is for example 600 000 Ugandan shilling or 165 US \$) and parents' contributions are still substantial. As one teacher explained:

It is a problem of access, the government has to act by reinvesting in our schools and students, for all children to have access. The USE [Universal Secondary Education, yearly state support cf. *supra*] should be revised for the government to really show itself capable of organizing education for all.⁵¹

This last quote points at the government's weak position and lack of means to fully support the educational sector. Through the shift from humanitarian to development aid, the Ugandan Government has put a large effort in centralizing aid interventions, but remains strongly dependent on them to provide education. From talking to individual students as well as to schoolteachers and directors, it is clear that external aid agencies remain a central actor of reference. School boards as well as individual students have developed several -what they call- 'coping mechanisms' in reaction to aid-withdrawal, (such as saving groups or supporting activities in agriculture).⁵² Yet all school directors emphasized the strong emphasis in their policy on being an 'eligible' candidate for

future donor-support (assuring the high results of students, maintenance of donor-funded infrastructure etc.).

Urban planning: from humanitarian- to development urbanism

When investigating Gulu's material landscape, it becomes clear that the protracted presence of aid agencies left its marks. Like other aid towns, Gulu is characterized by urban 'humanitarian geographies' and 'humanitarian architectures' in the form of gated aid compounds, donor-logo-billboard-cacophonies, expat-leisure infrastructure etc. Gulu's real estate market has boomed because of the massive international NGO presence which created a significant demand for particular housing standard and office-infrastructure.⁵³ Further, the service industry that developed out of this humanitarian urbanism resulted in a large number of hotels, bars and restaurants.

What the earlier chapter on education already illustrated, is a focus by NGOs on 'built' infrastructure (referred to by aid agencies themselves as the 'hardware' of their interventions). This materiality is an important aspect of their legitimization.⁵⁴ Today in Gulu this is reproduced by for example the large groups of young international volunteers that in the name of charity and philanthropy decent to Gulu each summer to dig wells, refurbish huts and repair schools.

The urban 'architectures of aid' for a long time stood in sharp contrast to the generally bad condition of urban infrastructure and lack of urban planning. Adam Branch has well described Gulu's urbanization process 'from camp to city', strongly influenced by dynamics of forced displacement.⁵⁵ In a situation where urban neighbourhoods at certain points had been overcrowded by tens of thousands of people looking for security, and where provisional makeshift huts had been occupying private yards, Gulu's urban trajectory can hardly be described in terms of 'proper urbanization'. The result of a largely informal and unplanned urbanization is reflected in a complex rural-urban mixture of land tenure arrangements, spatial layout and housing infrastructure.

The proliferation of aid in Gulu could not prevent increasing urban poverty, inequality, urban crime and the development of urban slum areas.⁵⁶ Research on urbanization in aid towns in general demonstrated how the humanitarian presence to some extent even reinforced fragmented urbanization and urban insecurity.⁵⁷ Inequality and gentrification in Gulu have also been reinforced by land grabbing of elites who increasingly installed in town in the post-conflict period.⁵⁸

Currently, Gulu is undergoing large-scale infrastructural works, and during our field visit in December 2017, the newly constructed roads gave Gulu's city-scape a new image. These current investments made in urban planning have to be understood in the town's process of being granted the administrative 'city status'. In 2011, Gulu town got officially selected by the Ugandan National Development Plan as one of the four 'regional cities' to be established in Uganda as part of the planned expansion of Uganda's urban infrastructure. To be granted the 'city status', the existing municipality needed to fulfill a number of conditions, with regards to infrastructure, population and surface. Some of the requirements were met, precisely because of Gulu's humanitarian urbanism trajectory: Compared to the other selected municipalities Gulu got high scores for social infrastructure (education and healthcare), and its strongly developed hotel-, banking- and telecommunication infrastructure.⁵⁹

This recent process of urban transformation in a way reflects the transition from humanitarian to development discourses in Gulu. In 2014, a junior NGO worker stated:

When Gulu will become a city, we will finally get proper roads, street lightening everywhere, and full electrification. The value and price of our land will go up, because of investments and business opportunities.⁶⁰

Investment, business, development, while being in the field in 2017, these terms indeed constantly came back during our conversations. The new roads and street lightning embody progression, Gulu taking a new turn. One religious leader said:

Yes, Gulu has entered a new phase. They [the government] can focus on development, on opportunities with Sudan. With a proper urban infrastructure it will also be easier to attract foreigners, not NGO people, but business people.⁶¹

This last quote illustrates the transition from Gulu as humanitarian space to a development space, leaving behind the 'old' notions of crisis, suffering and vulnerability and replacing them by projections of modernity, progression and development.

During the run up to the 2016 elections, Museveni reassured Gulu's inhabitants that the city status was just a question of time, comparing the process of approval with church confirmation, where Gulu city, as a good believer, had passed all the required 'tests' to be confirmed.⁶² While at the national level the Ugandan government uses Gulu's city status to emphasize its strong engagement with the region, on the local level the municipalities do so as well. After years of disengagement in urban planning, the current urban investments are seen as a 'come back' of the local government in Gulu. A seventy years old ex-municipal planning staff explained how at the beginning of the '80s, he and his department had been working on a similar, ambitious urban planning, back then in more 'classic' terms developing the standard residential-commercial-industrial zonings. He then explained how the war messed everything up and made an end to their plans.⁶³

However, more than a process of the state taking over from aid agencies in shaping the urban cityscape, we observe a process whereby the government uses a developmental approach on urbanism. This developmental urbanism is characterized by a far more centralizing role of the state (compared to a fragmented engagement of humanitarian actors) but also by the major role played by development actors such as the World Bank. Work Bank policy in Uganda has a strong urban component (as part of the processes of the 'urban turn' in development, mentioned earlier). In March 2015, the World Bank published a report titled *'The growth challenge: can Ugandan cities get to work?'*, in which it formulates a strong plea for a better 'managing' of urbanization, in order to contribute to 'Uganda's sustainable and inclusive growth'. In line with its neo-liberal narrative on development, policy makers should invest in 'improving urban planning and coordination to deliver better services, jobs and opportunities, making cities more competitive'.⁶⁴ This 'urban turn' was also reflected through a 2012 UNDP online vacancy for the proposal of a 'physical, detailed and strategic development plan for Gulu Municipality'. It underlined the 'recognition of the important role that urban areas play in national development as engines of growth and centres of investment, employment, education knowledge and technology transfer and ready markets for industrial and agricultural products'.⁶⁵ An explicit shift to development discourses, has made possible a more explicit engagement by external actors with the urban.

Apart from World Bank, a range of aid agencies has been involved from the start of the urban planning process. The popularization of the planning guidelines, the organization of participative planning workshops with 'key stakeholders', the printing and distributing of the maps and planning proposals were the tasks typically being carried out by NGOs. The most ambitious future projections of Gulu's urbanization project were captured in these participatory proposals. For example, the earlier mentioned Watoto Church contributed a 'master plan' proposal for Gulu Municipality.⁶⁶ UNDP, UNHabitat, UNICEF and a number of bilateral donors contributed to a new urban vision of Gulu, including a refurbished road network, slum-upgrading into social housing areas, green belts and recreational public space, urban agriculture plots, and of course, the indispensable golf court.

An important last note is that the 'comeback' of the state through the phasing out of humanitarianism and through the new urban planning is often contested. Government officials, high ranked staff of the Ugandan army and other political elites have repeatedly been accused of land grabbing and cadastral corruption.⁶⁷ In the process of evictions and forced reallocation for the construction of roads and the re-organization of urban space, many people initially resisted, but also explicitly referred to the state trying to steal their land 'to the benefit of the elites'.⁶⁸ Different involved actors operate with very different levels of legitimacy in urban planning as they do in the provision of other urban services.

Urban governance: *Ker Kwaro Acholi* and the rise and fall of an urban institution

Humanitarian urbanism has not only shaped the material landscape or service delivery mechanisms, it has also shaped urban governance institutions. Both Branch and Nibbe have mentioned the influence of humanitarianism on local politics, limiting their investigation to the role of aid agencies themselves becoming crucial actors shaping local politics and decision-making processes.⁶⁹ By elaborating upon the KKA, *Ker Kwaro Acholi* or the institution of Acholi cultural leaders in Gulu, we illustrate how humanitarianism led to emergence of an urban institution with significant political authority in Gulu. As such, humanitarian urbanism indeed reveals a process by which aid agencies did not only intervene in Gulu's urban space but increasingly governed it. However, we demonstrate that Potvin's notion of humanitarian urbanism might be too narrow with regards to its manifestations in urban governance. The example of KKA illustrates how humanitarian agencies do not only themselves become key actors in urban governance, they also work through existing actors in their re-shaping of the local institutional landscape. Additionally, the shift of legitimacy taking place through the process of humanitarian urbanism as described by Potvin needs to be nuanced. The following case-study demonstrates how the construction of public authority and legitimacy is a complex given in changing relations between the Ugandan state, its citizens and aid agencies.

During the peace-process and during transitional justice interventions in the immediate post-conflict period, cultural or customary leaders (locally referred to as 'chiefs' or '*rwot/rwodi*') have played an important role by advocating for 'traditional',⁷⁰ customary justice mechanisms.⁷¹ Their traditional approach on reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction was strongly supported by a large section of the international humanitarian actors present in Northern Uganda. Research on customary leaders in Gulu has demonstrated

how this donor support has reinforced the societal, economic and political position of these customary leaders.⁷² International donor support has led to the re-installment of customary chiefs⁷³ and to what Komujuni and Büscher have referred to as an increased donor-driven institutionalization of customary leadership, under the form of the emergence of the 'cultural institution' KKA.⁷⁴ Headed by a paramount chief, KKA represented a coordinating body of the different Acholi 'chiefdoms'⁷⁵ and functioned as a platform through which donor-support was channelled. A headquarter with the paramount chief's palace, a secretary and a courtroom were being constructed in Gulu town. With their access to significant amounts of donor support and by their strategic brokerage position between donors and local communities, they became an important body of public authority.⁷⁶ In the different government development programmes, KKA took part as an important local development actor.

As such, customary authority was turned into an urban-based heavily sponsored NGO-like institution, with a considerable voice in urban governance. Where customary chiefs earlier did not engage so much with urban issues as such (as their activities involved 'community projects' in villages within the different chiefdoms all over Acholi region), this changed with the creation of KKA. The Uganda government strongly prevents customary leaders all over Uganda from engaging in politics, and by law their authority is restricted to 'cultural matters'. In Gulu, they for example engage in issues like alcohol abuse or gender-based violence (which they perceive as an outcome of urbanization) by advocating for respecting Acholi 'traditional norms and values'.⁷⁷ In 2016 KKA took the lead in a process eventually leading to the voting by Gulu District Council of an ordinance on different measures of alcohol restrictions.⁷⁸

Its legitimacy as an actor of public authority during and right after the war was to a certain extent linked to the fact that people felt completely abandoned and betrayed by the government. People put more trust in and felt much more represented by these alternative governance institutions. However, the institutionalization of customary power into KKA was a contested process, as has been analysed in detail;⁷⁹ some people even perceived it as an effort by the state to bring customary leaders under its control.⁸⁰

From its emergence, KKA was locally perceived as an NGO-driven process,⁸¹ and talking to respondents in the field, the institution was often referred to as 'some kind of NGO' or a 'donor invention'. Our earlier research has shown how this process of donor-driven institutionalization has had a negative impact on the legitimacy of customary authority in general.⁸² Here, we would additionally argue that to a certain extent also the process of 'urbanisation' of customary authority further reinforced this de-legitimization. As a clan elder explained:

Many chiefs became corrupt with KKA. They spend their days in the office in Gulu, they eat donor's money, but this money does not come to the community.⁸³

Another community member, who was very positively speaking about the chief of her proper chiefdom:

He remains inside the community, instead of being abroad for trainings, workshops and to spend his days in KKA offices in Gulu.⁸⁴

These quotes, which were being confirmed through several other encounters we had during fieldwork, illustrate how customary authority remains very much attached to the

‘community’ and the ‘village’. Chiefs being part of KKA in Gulu were thus sometimes perceived seen as being ‘corrupt’, this corruption is referring to several things. It refers to the dependency of chiefs on NGO-support, it refers to corruption scandals within KKA⁸⁵ and it also refers to the general disinterest and disengagement of chiefs with their communities ‘back home’ in the villages. The following quote from an interview with a priest further reveals the complex position of customary chiefs between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’.

*Ker kwaro’s image of an NGO somehow contradicts the traditional ways of living the chiefs are advocating for. (...) It is supposed to be about tradition and culture, but apart from their traditional clothing nothing in the secretary looks like traditional. It is bureaucratic. Their modern houses do not have shrines anymore.*⁸⁶

Through the gradual transition from humanitarian to development narratives as described by Sande Lie,⁸⁷ KKA has tried to adapt, like any other NGO, shifting focus from justice and reconciliation to current ‘fundable’ topics such as land conflict, gender issues and environment. Today, KKA is very much struggling to keep up the position of public authority it once had. Donor withdrawal and corruption scandals have left the institution abandoned from international support, after local community members now also international partners have lost confidence in them.⁸⁸ This has triggered KKA to critically rethink its relation to external aid agencies. As the programme coordinator of KKA explained:

*We have to restore our public image. We need to get the confidence of the people (...) We are a truly cultural institution, representing the local communities.*⁸⁹

As part of this investment in a ‘new’ public image, KKA organized a three-day cultural festival in December 2017 in Gulu town. It was the very first of its kind, and the cultural institution had been preparing it long in advance. It was sponsored by private companies, a limited number of external donors (amongst others Safer World and CARITAS) and community contributions. During the festival, activities were being organized celebrating Acholi culture in different ways, through dance performances, exposition of cultural regalia, traditional cooking classes. Over 40 chiefs were present and thousands of people attended.⁹⁰ The need to ‘go back to the roots’ was often stressed throughout the several speeches. Yet, as we have argued earlier,⁹¹ after having been urban based donor-darlings for a long time, restoring their legitimacy by reconnecting back to their communities is not an easy task and will take more than the organization of a cultural festival.

Somehow contrary to their discourses of rethinking this ‘donor-darling’ position, KKA continues to invest in donor-support for the continuation of their activities. By lack of alternative sources of income, a KKA staff member explained being involved in project writing to attract funds for a project on environmental protection.⁹² Talking to an individual chief and his entourage who explicitly distance themselves from KKA and what they call ‘NGO chiefs’, revealed how their chieftom heavily invests in the necessary documents, administrative structures and financial regulations to attract donor funds.⁹³ Just as is the case for the educational sector as well as urban planning initiatives, in the absence of government funding or other forms of resources to step into the vacuum left by the departure of humanitarian NGOs, external aid agencies remain an important actor of reference. The continuous ‘proposal-writing’ mechanisms observed at all levels painfully illustrate the hope-already expressed in the first quote at the start of this article- that ‘donors will stay with them’.

Conclusion

This wish of urban inhabitants for donors ‘not to abandon them’, would in the literature be easily referred to as an inevitable process of ‘donor dependency’ after a long history of aid interventions. Some of the observed outcomes of NGO-withdrawal in Gulu indeed have pointed at a dependency of urban livelihoods and services to external donor funding. However, it is more useful to look at the on-going forces of humanitarian agency in different levels of urbanism and to approach humanitarian urbanism as a dynamic process shaping the relationships between urban inhabitants, donors and the state that go beyond this notion of dependency.

Today’s dynamics of the departure of humanitarian agencies have again re-shifted these relationships, and urban actors at several levels are repositioning themselves to these changes. Through the shift from humanitarian- to urban development narratives (clearly reflected for example through the current urban planning programmes), the Ugandan state tries to reclaim its control and authority over the city. The idea of ‘leaving behind’ humanitarianism to take a new urban path became an important symbol of these government efforts. Yet, these projections on a ‘post’-humanitarian urban trajectory are hampered by the strong problems of legitimacy with which the state is faced at several urban levels. Further, they mask the protracted power of humanitarianism that formed a thriving force behind the urban landscape and that until today continues to be reproduced through processes of urban governance and planning.

The current processes of change that we take as a starting point in this paper are still very much on-going, which makes it impossible to fully grasp its outcomes for the future. Yet, current tendencies do not only enable us to take a look to the future, they also provide us with an original window to look at the past. This paper has shown how they have revealed the profound and long-term workings of humanitarian urbanism as a social, spatial and political process. The notion of the city as an urban ‘aidland’ can as such be broadened as an analytical concept to study processes that involve several dimensions of urban governance.

We argue that the current forms of urbanism emerging from complex post-conflict settings cannot be accurately dealt with by scholars nor by local or international policy makers without recognizing the crucial role played by foreign humanitarian and development actors in shaping the past and current cityscapes. The explicit urban focus within current development agenda’s in Uganda and Africa in general will lead to future urban interventions aiming at making cities sustainable and capitalize upon their potential as crucial arenas of social and economic change. The three domains of focus in this paper, social service delivery, urban planning and urban institutions are three key domains of intervention in this urban agenda. In fragile post-conflict societies, these urban development interventions are strongly connected to peace-building and state-building agenda’s, in which the aspect of legitimacy is key. The political implications of humanitarian urbanism need further research in order for us to fully understand how aid agencies, apart from being dominant actors themselves, also work through existing actors and institutions in urban governance.

Notes

1. Interview with NGO employee (Gulu, August 2016).
2. Branch, “The Violence of Peace”; Alix-Garcia et al., “The Landscape of Conflict.”

3. Sande Lie, "From Humanitarian Action."
4. A government coordinated framework through which development support is channelled to northern Uganda. Its first phase ran from 2008 to 2012, its second phase from 2012 to 2015, its third phase was initiated in 2015 to run until 2019.
5. Britain, Denmark, the EU, Germany, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden suspended their budget support for PRDP (Sande Lie, "From Humanitarian Action"; interview communication staff of NGO forum, Gulu, July 2015).
6. Interview with and supporting documents from the Director NGO forum (August 2016).
7. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism," 3.
8. Resnick, "Urban Governance."
9. Björkdahl and Buckeley-Zitsel, "Spatializing Peace and Conflict"; Kirsch and Flint, "Reconstructing Conflict"; Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*.
10. Aphorpe, "Postcards from Aidland."
11. Mosse, *Adventures in Aidland*; Fechter and Hindman, *Inside the Everyday lives*.
12. Harrison, "Beyond the Looking Glass."
13. Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*.
14. Clouette and Wise, *Forms of Aid*.
15. See for example: Büscher and Vlassenroot, "Humanitarian Presence and Urban Development"; Branch, "Gulu Town in War"; Alix-Garcia et al. "The Landscape of Conflict."
16. Lucchi, "Between War and Peace"; Grünwald, "Aid in a City at War."
17. Sassen, "When the City Itself."
18. See for example Stepputat and van Voorst, "Cities on the Agenda."
19. Myers, *African Cities*.
20. See: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/> (accessed November 12, 2017); and <https://unhabitat.org/new-urban-agenda-adopted-at-habitat-iii/> (accessed November 12, 2017).
21. Lucchi, "Between War and Peace"; Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism."
22. Büscher and Vlassenroot, "Humanitarian Presence and Urban Development."
23. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism," 3.
24. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism," XX.
25. Branch, "Against Humanitarian Impunity"; Dolan, "Understanding War and Its Continuation."
26. Woodburn, "IDPs and the Reconstruction"; Branch, "Humanitarianism, Violence, and the Camp"; Mergelsberg, "The Displaced Family."
27. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism." Potvin explicitly focuses on the production of the urban space through humanitarian action *beyond* the camp realities. She argues that while indeed the camp remains the spatial embodiment 'par excellence' of humanitarian action and the prototypical form of humanitarian spatial production, we may not overlook the 'vast (unbounded) landscapes that are increasingly shaped and reshaped by the variegated spatial practices of humanitarianism' (6).
28. Büscher and Vlassenroot, "Humanitarian Presence and Urban Development."
29. Branch, "Gulu Town in War"; Nibbe, "The Effects of a Narrative."
30. Douma and Van der Haar, "Service Delivery in Post-conflict Contexts."
31. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism."
32. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*.
33. Interview, communication staff, NGO forum (Gulu, April 2015).
34. The notions of 'hardware' and 'software' are standard vocabulary in the humanitarian and development discourse (De Sardan, *Anthropology and Development*).
35. Annan et al., "From Rebel to Returnee."
36. Interview, representative, Acholi Education Initiative (Gulu, April 2015).
37. Interview, NGO employee (Gulu, Januari 2014).
38. Interview, 'mother' of SOS Childrens Village (Gulu, April 2015).
39. Interview, school director primary school (Gulu, April 2015); Interview representative Acholi Education Initiative (Gulu, April 2015).

40. Büscher, "Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation."
41. Potvin, "Humanitarian Urbanism."
42. Interview staff Invisible Children (Gulu, April 2015).
43. The 'end of' Invisible Children was a direct outcome of its controversial role in politics and the controversy around its 'Kony 2012' action. (see: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/16/invisible-children-closing_n_6329990.html, accessed October 6, 2017).
44. Interview, director, Sr. Samuel Baker school (Gulu, April 2015).
45. Focus group discussion, students from St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015).
46. Focus group discussion, teachers from St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015).
47. Interview, representative, Acholi Education Initiative (Gulu, April 2015).
48. Focus group discussion, teachers, Sr. Samuel Baker school (Gulu, April 2015); interview communication staff NGO forum (Gulu, April 2015).
49. Focus group discussion, teachers, St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015).
50. Universal Secondary Education policy, introduced in 2006 in Uganda to achieve equal access to secondary education.
51. Focus group discussion, teachers, St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015).
52. Focus group discussion, teachers, St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015); focus group discussion, students from St. Josephs College (Gulu, April 2015).
53. Branch, "Gulu Town in War."
54. Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*.
55. Branch, "From Camp to Slum."
56. Branch, "Gulu Town in War"; Branch, "The Violence of Peace."
57. Büscher and Vlassenroot, "Humanitarian Presence and Urban Development"; Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*.
58. Branch, "The Violence of Peace."
59. Interview, urban engineer, Gulu Municipality (Gulu, January 2014) interview municipal Mayor (Gulu, January 2014).
60. Interview, local NGO staff member (Gulu, January 2014).
61. Interview, religious leader (Gulu, December 2017).
62. Interview, senior planner, Municipal Council (Gulu, April 2016); see also Museveni assures Gulu on city status: <http://www.chimpreports.com/museveni-assures-gulu-on-city-status/> (accessed November 17, 2017).
63. Interview, ex-municipal planning staff (Gulu, January 2014).
64. *Managing rapid urbanization can help Uganda achieve sustainable and inclusive growth*: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/03/03/managing-rapid-urbanization-can-help-uganda-achieve-sustainable-and-inclusive-growth> (accessed November 17, 2017).
65. *UNDP Procurement Notices*: http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=8528 (accessed August 14, 2017).
66. See the 'Gulu master plan' on this website: <http://www.idgarchitects.com.au/design-portfolio/gulu-masterplan/> (accessed August 14, 2017).
67. Interview, Gulu-based LSA Academic (Gulu, April 2015); interview, priest of Catholic church (Gulu, January 2014).
68. Interview, local academic researcher (Gulu, April 2015); interview, local academic researcher, (Gulu, December 2017).
69. Branch, "Gulu Town in War"; Nibbe "The Effects of a Narrative."
70. The notion of 'traditional' is contested in this context, as transitional rituals performed with donor support have been referred to as an 'invention of tradition' (Allen, "The International Criminal Court").
71. Allen, "The International Criminal Court"; Dolan, *Social Torture*; Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*.
72. Komujuni and Büscher, "In Search for Chiefly Authority"; Paine, "A Re-invention of Traditional Authority."

73. This process has been described in detail by Paine, “A Re-invention of Traditional Authority.” Using funding from the Belgium government, ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development) identified, anointed and re-instated as many as 54 Acholi chiefs, each representing their ‘chiefdom’ including one or several clans, often scattered over different territories within Acholiland (Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority,” 15).
74. Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority.”
75. Chiefdoms, at the time of writing there are 54 recognized under KKA.
76. Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority.”
77. Interview, KKA staff member (Gulu, December 2017).
78. Interview, KKA staff member (Gulu, December 2017).
79. Paine, “A Re-invention of Traditional Authority.”
80. Paine, “A Re-invention of Traditional Authority.” Interview, prime minister, Pagea chiefdom (Gulu, December 2017).
81. Paine, “A Re-invention of Traditional Authority.”
82. Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority”
83. Focus group discussion, elders, Pagea chiefdom (Gulu, December 2017).
84. Focus group discussion, elders, Omoro chiefdom (Gulu, December 2017).
85. In 2014 a series of corruption scandals caused a sudden disengagement from international NGOs and embassies.
86. Interview, Priest, Catholic Church (Gulu, January 2014).
87. Sande Lie, “From Humanitarian Action.”
88. For more details, see Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority.”
89. Interview, staff member KKA (Gulu, December 2017).
90. Fieldwork observations (Gulu, December 2017).
91. Komujuni and Büscher, “In Search for Chiefly Authority.”
92. Interview, KKA staff (Gulu, December 2017).
93. Interview, spokesperson, Pagea chiefdom (Gulu, December 2017).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Bibliography

- Alix-Garcia, Jennifer, Anne Bartlett, and David Saah. “The Landscape of Conflict: IDPs, Aid and Land-use Change in Darfur.” *Journal of Economic Geography* 13 (2013): 589–617.
- Allen, Tim. “The International Criminal Court and the Invention of Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda.” *Politique Africaine* 107, no. 3 (2007): 147–166.
- Annan, Jeannie, Moriah Brier, and Filder Aryemo. “From ‘Rebel’ to ‘Returnee’: Daily Life and Reintegration for Young Soldiers in Northern Uganda.” *Journal of Adolescent Research* 24, no. 6 (2009): 639–667.
- Apthorpe, Raymond. “Postcards from Aidland, or: Love from Bubbleland.” Paper presented at a graduate seminar at IDS, University of Sussex, June 10, 2005.
- Björkdahl, Annika, and Susanne Buckley-Zistel. *Spatializing Peace and Conflict: Mapping the Production of Places, Sites and Scales of Violence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Branch, Adam. “Against Humanitarian Impunity: Rethinking Responsibility for Displacement and Disaster in Northern Uganda.” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 2, no. 2 (2008): 151–173.
- Branch, Adam. *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Branch, Adam. “From Camp to Slum: The Politics of Urban Displacement in Gulu Town, Uganda.” MISR Working Paper 2, Makerere University, 2011.

- Branch, Adam. "Gulu in War ... and Peace? The Town as Camp in Northern Uganda." *Urban Studies* 50, no. 15 (2013): 3152–3167.
- Branch, Adam. "Humanitarianism, Violence and the Camp in Northern Uganda." *Civil Wars* 11, no. 4 (2009): 477–501.
- Branch, Adam. "The Violence of Peace: Seeking Political Futures from Uganda's Northern War." MISR Working Paper 7, 2012. Accessed November 12, 2017. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3018511.
- Büscher, Karen. "Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation in the Eastern Congolese Periphery: The Case of Goma." PhD diss., Department Conflict & Development Studies, Ghent University, 2011.
- Büscher, Karen, and Koen Vlassenroot. "Humanitarian Presence and Urban Development: New Opportunities and Contrasts in Goma, DRC." *Disasters* 34, no. 2 (2010): S256–S273.
- Clouette, Benedict, and Wise Marlisa. *Forms of Aid: Architectures of Humanitarian Space*. Basel: Birkhauser, 2017.
- De Sardan, Jean-Pierre O. *Anthropology and Development. Understanding Contemporary Social Change*. London: Zed Books, 2005.
- Dolan, Chris. *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda 1986–2006*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.
- Dolan, Chris. "Understanding War and Its Continuation: The Case of Northern Uganda." PhD diss., Development Studies Institute, LSE, London, 2005.
- Douma, Nynke, and Gemma Van der Haar. "Service Delivery in Post-conflict Settings." In *Multi-Stakeholder Processes, Service Delivery and State Institutions*, edited by M. Noor and E. Al. Theoretical Framework and Methodologies Working Paper.
- Fechter, Anne-Meike, and Heithier Hindman. *Inside the Everyday Lives of Development Workers: The Challenges and Futures of Aidland*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2011.
- Grünwald, François. "Aid in a City at War: The Case of Mogadishu, Somalia." *Disasters* 36, no. 1 (2012): S105–S125.
- Harrison, Elizabeth. "Beyond the Looking Glass? 'Aidland Reconsidered.'" *Critique of Anthropology* 33, no. 3 (2013): 263–279.
- Komujuni, Sophie, and Karen Büscher. "In Search for Chiefly Authority in 'Post-aid' Acholiland: Customary Chiefs Navigating the Departure of International Aid Agencies in Northern Uganda." *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Forthcoming.
- Kirsch, Scott, and Colin Flint. *Reconstructing Conflict: Integrating War and Post-War Geographies*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Lucchi, Elena. "Between War and Peace: Humanitarian Assistance in Violent Urban Settings." *Disasters* 34, no. 4 (2010): 973–995.
- Mergelsberg, Ben. "The Displaced Family: Moral Imaginations and Social Control in Pabbo, Northern Uganda." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 6: 64–80.
- Mosse, David. *Adventures in Aidland: The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development*. Oxford: Berghann Books, 2001.
- Myers, Garth. *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*. London: Zed Books, 2011.
- Nibbe, Ayesha Anne. "The Effects of a Narrative: Humanitarian Aid and Action in the Northern Uganda Conflict." University of California Davis, 2010.
- Paine, Clare. "A Re-invention of Traditional Authority in Northern Uganda." Mphil thesis, Aberystwyth University, Wales, 2014.
- Potvin, Marianne. "Humanitarian Urbanism under a Neoliberal Regime: Lessons from Kabul." Paper presented at the International RC21 Conference, 2013. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://www.rc21.org/conferences/berlin2013/RC21-Berlin-Papers/24-1-Potvin-Marianne.pdf>.
- Resnick, Danielle. "Urban Governance and Service Delivery in African Cities: The Role of Politics and Policies." *Development Policy Review* 32, no. 1 (2014): s3–s17.
- Sande Lie, John H. "From Humanitarian Action to Development aid in Northern Uganda and the Formation of a Humanitarian-development Nexus." *Development in Practice* 27 (2017): 136–207.

- Sassen, Saskia. "When the City Itself Becomes a Technology of War." *Theory, Culture and Society* 27, no. 6 (2010): 33–50.
- Smirl, Lisa. *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism*. London: Zed Books, 2015.
- Stepputat, Finn, and Roanne van Voorst. "Cities on the Agenda: Urban Governance and Sustainable Development." DIIS Report, 2016: 04. Accessed October 30, 2017. <https://www.prismaweb.org/nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Cities-on-the-agenda-Urban-governance-and-sustainable-developmet>.
- Woodburn, Ursula. "IDPs and the Reconstruction of Northern Uganda." *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs*, Annuaire 2007–2008: 443–465.